

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 EUR-12 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 IO-13 OMB-01

EB-07 FAA-00 DOTE-00 SCA-01 SY-05 A-01 OPR-02 OC-06

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INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS NIACT IMMEDIATE

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AMEMBASSY LONDON NIACT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI NIACT IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, IS

SUBJECT: RABIN KNESSET STATEMENT ON ISRAELI ACTION IN UGANDA

SUMMARY

1. PRIME MINISTER RABIN, AT SPECIAL KNESSET SESSION AT 3PM ON JULY 4, DELIVERED FIFTEEN MINUTE STATEMENT TO PACKED CHAMBER ON GOI DECISIONS AND IDF ACTIVITY AT ENTEBBE AIRPORT ON NIGHT OF JULY 3-4. HIS MAIN POINT WAS THAT ISRAELI GOVERNMENT BEARS EXCLUSIVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE RESCUE OPERATION. ALL KNESSET PARTIES EXCEPT RAKAH COMMUNISTS ADOPTED RESOLUTION PRAISING THE IDF ACTION. FOLLOWING ARE HIGHLIGHTS. END SUMMARY.

2. THE ISRAELI DEFENSE FORCES (IDF), RABIN SAID, HAD CARRIED OUT WITH GREAT HEROISM THE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TO RESCUE THE HOSTAGES ON THE AIR FRANCE AIRCRAFT AT ENTEBBE AIRPORT. THREE ISRAELIS, TWO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CIVILIAN HOSTAGES AND THE MILITARY COMMANDER, HAD BEEN KILLED.

(RABIN DID NOT SPECIFY UGANDAN OR TERRORIST CASUALTIES). THIS WAS ONE OF THE FINEST OPERATIONS IN THE IDF'S HISTORY, AND ONE OF WHICH ALL ISRAELIS COULD BE JUSTIFIABLY PROUD.

3. THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT ALONE BEARS THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THIS RESCUE OPERATION WHICH WAS NOT COORDINATED WITH ANY OTHER GOVERNMENT. HOWEVER, ALL GOVERNMENTS MUST WORK TOGETHER IN THE CONTINUING STRUGGLE AGAINST INTERNATIONAL AIR TERRORISM.

4. RABIN REVIEWED DEVELOPMENT OF EVENTS SINCE START OF HIJACKING INCIDENT, EMPHASIZING THE UNIQUE DIFFICULTIES CONFRONTING THE GOI IN DEALING WITH SITUATION INVOLVING GOVERNMENT OF UGANDA WITH WHICH ISRAEL DOES NOT HAVE DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS. FROM THE OUTSET, THERE WAS FULL POLITICAL COORDINATION WITH THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT FOR THE RELEASE OF THE HOSTAGES. IT BECAME CLEAR DURING THE WEEK THAT A) A MAIN OBJECTIVE OF THE TERRORISTS WAS TO KEEP THE ISRAELI PASSENGERS HOSTAGES AND B) IDI AMIN, THE HEAD OF THE UGANDAN GOVERNMENT, WAS COOPERATING WITH THE TERRORISTS.

5. ON JULY 1, THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT DECLARED ITS READINESS TO NEGOTIATE AN EXCHANGE OF PRISONERS FOR THE RELEASE OF THE HOSTAGES. THIS WAS NOT A PHONY DEVICE TO BUY TIME. THE GOI WAS PREPARED TO IMPLEMENT ITS JULY 1 DECISION.

6. SIMULTANEOUSLY, HOWEVER, THE IDF FORMULATED ITS PLANS FOR A RESCUE OPERATION. IN THE LAST PHASE, THE GOI UNANIMOUSLY AUTHORIZED THE IDF TO CARRY OUT THIS OPERATION. THE GOVERNMENT MAINTAINED FULL CONSULTATIONS AND BRIEFINGS WITH THE KNESSET FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND SECURITY COMMITTEE THROUGHOUT THE VARIOUS STAGES OF DECISION-MAKING.

7. THIS RESCUE OPERATION CONSTITUTES ISRAEL'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE INTERNATIONAL FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM. BUT THIS STRUGGLE IS FAR FROM FINISHED AND IT WILL REQUIRE CONTINUING VIGILANCE AND ACTION. IN CLOSING, RABIN AGAIN NOTED THAT THE RESCUE OPERATION WAS ONE OF THE GREATEST ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE IDF.

8. LIKUD OPPOSITION LEADER, BEGIN SAID THAT ISRAEL HAD NOT HAD NATIONAL UNITY AS GREAT AS IT ENJOYED TODAY SINCE ITS VICTORY IN THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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1967 WAR. HE PAID TRIBUTE TO THE IDF, AND EXPRESSED CONDOLENCES TO THE ISRAELI VICTIMS. CONGRATULATING RABIN FOR HIS LEADERSHIP, BEGIN SAID THAT RESCUE OPERATION HAD FULL SUPPORT OF THE LIKUD, AND THAT IN THIS MOMENT INTERNAL POLITICAL DIFFERENCES WERE TRANSCENDED BY SENSE OF NATIONAL UNITY. BEGIN URGED FORMATION OF SPECIAL COMMANDO UNIT TO COMBAT TERRORISM. HE COMPARED TERRORISTS TO NAZIS, AND MADE SHARP ATTACK ON SOVIETS FOR SUPPLYING UGANDA'S RACIST DICTATOR WITH MIGS AND OTHER EQUIPMENT. HE WARNED ARABS THAT ISRAEL WILL NOT BE PASSIVE

IN CONFRONTING ITS ENEMIES, ALTHOUGH IT SEEKS TO LIVE IN PEACE WITH ITS NEIGHBORS.

9. AT CLOSE OF 45 MINUTE SESSION, ALL PARTIES EXCEPT RAKAH COMMUNISTS ADOPTED RESOLUTION EXPRESSING APPRECIATION TO IDF, CONDOLENCES TO ISRAELI DEAD, AND QUICK RECOVERY FOR THE WOUNDED.

10. COMMENT: CABINET AND KNESSET MEMBERS WERE OBVIOUSLY RELIEVED AT END OF WEEK LONG ORDEAL AND NEAR-JUBILANT OVER ITS OUTCOME. SUCCESSFUL RESCUE OPERATION HAS GIVEN STRONG BOOST TO PUBLIC MORALE AND CERTAINLY STRENGTHENED RABIN GOVERNMENT'S DOMESTIC POSITION. IN CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF, KNESSET MEMBERS EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE WHICH HAD ALREADY RECEIVED WIDE DISSEMINATION. TOON

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